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ABSTRACT

A kindergarten teacher implemented and evaluated a practicum intervention designed to develop positive attitudes among 122 parents concerning their children's learning through play in developmental kindergarten and pre-first grade programs. Teachers reported that parents did not appreciate the benefits of learning through play, and preferred structured academic learning. Play education workshops for parents and a newsletter focusing on play were developed. The four workshops were presented by guest speakers and focused on the topics of: (1) play in learning; (2) the use of critical thinking in play; (3) the importance of playing outside for children's learning; and (4) the use of play in the first grade classroom. Published monthly, the newsletters included articles on play in the classroom, play activities for the home, suggestions for parents about literature on play, and a problem-solving section that enabled parents to ask questions about their children. Evaluation data indicated that the implementation strategy successfully created positive parental perceptions about play. Appendices provide transcripts of interviews, questionnaires and item data, and sample newsletters. Citations number 42. (RH)

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Creating Positive Parental Perceptions About Play in a Developmental Kindergarten

by

Raquel Kubala

Cluster XXX

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A Practicum II Report presented to the Ed.D. Program in Early and Middle Childhood in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Education

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ABSTRACT

Creating Positive Parental Perceptions About Play in a Developmental Kindergarten.
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Descriptors: Kindergarten Children/Pre-first Children/ Early Childhood Education/Developmental Kindergarten/ Play/Parent Involvement/Parent Education/Workshops/ Newsletters/Kindergarten Parents/Play in Learning

This practicum addressed the need to develop positive parental perceptions and attitudes towards play in a developmental kindergarten program. Learning through the use of play is an important part of early childhood programs. Many kindergarten programs do not offer the parents sufficient exposure to learn about developmentally appropriate practices. Recent research has shown that by providing parents with an education program, which is informative and which allows them to participate in their child's learning, will create positive perceptions and attitudes towards play in a developmental kindergarten program.

The writer's goal was to create positive parental perceptions about play in a developmental kindergarten for those parents participating in the intervention strategy. In addressing this goal, the writer implemented a parent education program. The program made use of monthly newsletters and bi-monthly workshops.

The parents participating in the intervention strategy were successful in achieving the practicum objectives. In addition, the parents involved in the practicum developed better interpersonal skills with their children, as observed by the writer.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Description of Work Setting and Community

This project took place in a public school which was established in 1987. The school offered educational programs for students in kindergarten through fifth grade. The school was located on a 13 acre parcel of land in Florida.

The population of the school was 730 students. The school's student body consisted of 1% Black non-Hispanic, .1% Indian, 3.2% Hispanic, 1.6% Asian, and 94.1% White non-Hispnanic (BCPS District and School Profiles, 1989). Approximately 9.5% of those students came from low income families (BCPS District and School Profiles, 1989). A total of 69 students were receiving free and reduced price meals (BCPS District and School Profiles, 1989). The majority of the students (90%) came from middle and upper income homes.

The community involved in this practicum was made up of middle and upper class parents of the kindergarten students who attended this school. The community consisted mainly of white collar workers and business oriented professionals. Many of the parents were both working full time to maintain the household. They were concerned parents who wanted to see their children become

successful adults. As a result, the parents unknowingly pressured their children to succeed academically. They directed their children to become early achievers in formalized academic areas.

The kindergarten program provided at this public school was a developmentally oriented program. The program encouraged the use of developmentally appropriate learning practices for young learners. The kindergarten teachers at this site were all certified Early Childhood educators who were aware of the significance of age appropriate learning practices. This kindergarten program provided the children with a curriculum which took into account the child's physical, emotional, social, and cognitive needs as they grow and mature.

Writer's Work Setting and Role

The writer was certified in Early Childhood and Elementary Education, with a Masters degree in Elementary Education. The writer was responsible for the education of a group of kindergarten age students at this location. Prior to coming to this public institution, the writer worked as a kindergarten teacher, for three years, in a low-income community. Other experiences included teaching fourth grade in a parochial school, administering the Gesell Test as a qualified examiner for two years, and serving as a reading resource person.

CHAPTER II

STUDY OF THE PROBLEM

Problem Description

The majority of the parents, whose children attended the developmental kindergarten program, came from affluent homes. Ninety percent of those parents had been identified as coming from middle to upper income households. Hranitz and Eddowes (1987) believed that parents who have ample financial resources to fulfill the daily demands of living, will sometimes establish standards for their children that are difficult to achieve. Parents who have middle class values, many times, want their children to be successful in all areas of their lives. Elkind (1981) stated that there are pressures being placed on middle-class children to mature quickly in the area of cognitive functioning. The parents of the kindergarten students in this practicum were uncomfortable with the developmental practice of learning through the use of play. These parents did not receive any form of assistance in learning more about developmentally appropriate practices.

The writer had several interviews with the principal at this public institution. The interviews centered on various topics of concern for the school. The main problem identified involved the lack of positive

perceptions the parents possessed in the area of developmentally appropriate learning practices. In addition, the principal confirmed there was a problem with the dissemination of information to the parents concerning the topic of developmentally appropriate learning practices. The principal expressed that a problem also existed in the communication of informational knowledge and resources to the community of kindergarten parents. The principal commented that information on appropriate learning practices needed to be provided to the parents throughout the year. A transcript of an interview with the principal illustrated the problem (Appendix A).

Briefly stated, the problem at this elementary school was the parents needed to develop positive perceptions about the benefits of learning through the use of developmentally appropriate play activities.

Problem Documentation

In order to prove that the parents of the kindergarten children at this elementary school needed to develop positive perceptions about learning through the use of play, the writer developed a teacher questionnaire. The questionnaire was given to the kindergarten teachers at this elementary school. The questionnaire was designed to determine if the teachers at this elementary school felt the parents needed to develop positive perceptions in the

area of learning through the use of play. The responses showed that all six kindergarten teachers, who responded to the questionnaire, agreed with the principal's and the writer's observations (Appendix B). The parents of the kindergarten students at this elementary school did not fully comprehend the benefits of learning through the use of play.

The majority of the kindergarten teachers felt that the parents would develop a more accepting attitude about the benefits of learning through the use of play if they knew more about it. The teachers also stressed that the parents were not provided with any type of program to remediate this current situation. They all believed that if such a program were to be implemented, it would greatly alleviate the parents' fears and misconceptions about learning through the use of play.

Proof that a problem really existed was also visible during grade level team meetings. All six kindergarten teachers shared similar observations which they had made during parent/teacher conferences. They found that many of the parents were concerned with when their child would begin formal reading and writing programs. The teachers felt, in general, that the parents did not fully appreciate the benefits of learning through the use of play. Instead, the teachers stated that the parents wanted

to know what they should be doing to have fluent readers and writers. The teachers stressed the fact that many of the parents believed that centers, such as the housekeeping area and the block area, did not promote the structured academic learning situations the parents would have liked their children to participate in.

Causative Analysis

The parents of the kindergarten children enrolled at this public school were influenced by a combination of elements (education, societal/parental pressures, changing family structure, and societal/governmental pressures). These factors acted together to influence the perceptions these parents held about learning through the use of play.

An educational program should be designed with the needs of all the students, as well as parents, involved as the major priority. If a program is to be truly effective and worthwhile, the needs of both the students and parents participating must be properly fulfilled. In a school where the majority of the kindergarten parents were demonstrating a lack of positive perceptions about the use of play in a developmentally oriented kindergarten, the curriculum should have provided some form of parent education program. Many parents were not aware of the significance or importance of using developmentally oriented learning

practices when working with young children. They had not been given the benefit of learning about developmentally age appropriate learning situations.

Pressure from parents, to rush development by placing children in early school academic programs, so that they obtain high academic success instead of a developmentally appropriate curriculum, had also affected the parents' perceptions about learning through the use of play. The parents felt that their children should not be experiencing the curriculum that was stressed in preschool programs. Instead, they felt that their child should be learning in a more formalized and structured program which stressed academics and not play. They wanted to see their children gain more from their education. They did not realize the pressure they were exerting may have harmed, instead of helped the child.

The changing family structure had also caused many parents to view the school as a place where their child must achieve early success. Many working parents did not have the time to spend playing with their children. They felt their quality time should have revolved around increasing their child's reading vocabulary or computation skills. They were unaware of the harm they may have caused when they pushed their children into developmentally inappropriate cognitive skills. They needed to be made conscious of all

the aspects of development for young children, not just merely academic achievement in reading and writing.

The push by local and federal governments for the "back to basics" movement in the United States had greatly influenced parental perceptions about the value of learning through the use of play. Declining test scores had forced federal and local governments to push for a more demanding curriculum.

Consequently, parents began to feel the pressure that their children should be working to achieve mastery in all subject areas through the use of highly structured formalized academic programs. This, however, was a misconception on the part of the parents. They needed to learn that a developmentally appropriate program would allow their children to learn cognitively, as well as successfully achieve many of the goals the parents themselves had established.

In conclusion, it is evident that there was not just one major factor responsible for influencing the parents perceptions about learning through the use of developmentally appropriate practices. There were educational, societal, parental, and governmental pressures which had contributed to the lack of positive perceptions about learning through the use of play. The educator must be aware of the perceptions a parent has

towards a program and provide the parents with an informative and useful program which will create positive perceptions about play during the kindergarten experience.

Relationship of the Problem to the Literature

The kindergarten curriculum had always been viewed as a program in which young children learned about the world around them as they participate in developmentally appropriate play activities. Today's societal pressures for academic success have forced the parents of young children to exert pressure on their own children to obtain academic success at an earlier age. Seefeldt (1985) stated that five year olds were not ready to face any form of academic pressure. She felt that a developmentally appropriate curriculum should center around play experiences and language. Society should not place academic pressure on young children when physically, emotionally, and cognitively, many children are incapable of handling such pressures.

Play is the method by which a child learns what no one else can teach him (Frank, 1964). Children interpret and make sense of the surrounding world through the use of play. Barritt, Corsano, Isenberg and Suransky (1982) defined play as the means by which children express comprehension about the world which surrounds them and learn about their environment as they actively interact

with their surroundings. Play is an essential part of the learning process. Young children need to experience learning through play if they are to develop their emotional, physical, and cognitive abilities to their fullest extent. The Association for Childhood Education International recommended that educators, as well as parents, respect the need for all children to play and assert the significant function play serves in all children's overall development (Isenberg and Quisenberry, 1988). Parents needed to be made aware of the positive effects play can have on their children.

Henniger (1987), in his article "Learning Mathematics and Science Through Play," stated that play is a very important tool for learning because it provides children with many opportunities for hands-on experiences. A developmentally oriented kindergarten program should encourage activities which would have allowed children to become active participants of their own learning. Children learn by physically and cognitively acting upon what is learned. The learning process for children is initiated through play. All children need the play opportunity to experiment and take risks in a nonthreatening environment.

The parents of these children stressed that their children obtain academic achievement. Elkind (1982) believed that it is wrong for parents to place such

stressful demands on children. Many times, parents held very high hopes for their children that they would receive a better education than they did when they were young. Parents did not realize that a better education does not necessarily mean a highly formalized academic program. If a child is not exposed to developmentally age appropriate programs, they may experience a sense of failure which may affect their entire outlook on future education. Parents unknowingly were creating a stressful environment, which might have resulted in emotional and academic problems.

A child who encountered pressures in academic achievement, may have begun to feel that he is failing. Seefeldt (1985) stated that these feelings of failure may ultimately inhibit the child and result in the child having negative feelings about school and learning. Greenberg (1990) stated that the aim of early childhood education is not to memorize or teach basic educational skills, but to instill a love of learning beyond textbook knowledge, which would remain with a child as he grew and matured into adulthood.

Harrington-Lueker (1989) stressed the fact that many parents set their children's future at an early age and consequently begin pressuring the young child to achieve in a highly formalized program. Parents needed to learn to slow down and stop placing pressure on their young children

to succeed at such an early age. Davis (1980) found that when young children were forced into strict routines, workbooks and dittos, they would develop self-defense mechanisms in order to avoid the highly structured academic situation. She observed that many children develop physical ailments or demonstrate negative feelings about school and learning when pushed too soon into a highly formalized academic program.

The changing family structure had also greatly influenced how early childhood programs were run. Mother was no longer at home waiting for her children to come home. Economic factors had forced many women to become working mothers. As a result, the mother did not have the same amount of time to interact with her children. Harrington-Leuker (1989) stated that today's parents are facing many economical and societal pressures which has made many parents devote less time to parenting. As a result, the parents did not have the same amount of time to interact with their children. Consequently, children were placed in preschool programs which, many times, were not developmentally oriented.

Suransky (1983) reviewed a variety of preschool programs in the Midwest and found that many child care centers were not allowing the children to grow and learn in developmentally appropriate ways. Instead, these

preschool programs stressed preparatory skills for first grade. Davis (1980) found that parents, whose children had participated in some form of early schooling, will place pressure on administrators and teachers, demanding to have early formal academic programs. Teachers and administrators must not bend to such demands, but must strive to educate the parents as to why such practices are inappropriate for young children.

In a study by Rothlein and Brett (1984), they revealed that, in general, parents do not support the idea of a large amount of time being used to play. Parents, in this study, thought of play as a time for fun or amusement. It is evident that these parents did not regard play as a significant tool which young children use in the learning process. Rothlein and Brett (1984) stated that there is a significant need to inform and educate parents on the benefits of supporting children's play activities in early childhood programs.

Play encompasses the total development of the child. Parents, due to a lack of knowledge about developmentally appropriate practices, forgot that childhood is a time to experiment and learn while having fun. Sava (1985) concurred with this belief. He stated that, many times, parents forget that young children need time to participate in active and enjoyable language rich

learning environments. This environment was not found in a highly structured program that stressed academic achievement. Simmons and Brewer (1985) stated that when parents were provided with information and education about early childhood education and developmental teaching strategies, parents acquire a more positive perception about the school program and its teachers.

Parents need to become informed participants in their child's learning process. Van Hoven (1987) believed that parents need to be informed and knowledgeable, so that they may fully appreciate what is required in a developmentally oriented curriculum. An informed parent would understand and appreciate the significance of play in kindergarten. A parent who is not informed tended to have negative perceptions about play.

The movement for back to basics had also greatly influenced parental perceptions and attitudes about learning in kindergarten programs. Friesen (1984) pointed out that the push for academics in the back to basics movement should not dispel the use of developmentally appropriate practices. Kindergarten age children need developmentally oriented programs if they are to successfully grow and learn. Parents needed to become informed participants in their child's education.

Political factors caused parents to pressure educators into instituting a more formalized program at the kindergarten level. New technological advances in the information age, such as computers, had many parents believing that formal instruction at an earlier age is essential if their children were to compete in the world of tomorrow. Elkind (1986) pointed out that parents and educators should be aware of the negative aspects of computer use with young children. He stated that the use of computers may cause young children to develop the assumption that they have limitations in their cognitive thought processes (Elkind, 1986). In turn, this may have caused a stressful emotional environment which might have resulted in the child disliking any form of schooling. The child might have internalized these feelings and developed a poor self-concept.

Glickman (1979) believed that the back to basics movement had forced society to demand a rigid instructional program. He felt that the declining amount of time spent on play was one variable which has caused lower achievement scores. Hatch and Freeman (1988) found that the back to basics movement had influenced parents' perceptions about the use of play during kindergarten. They found many parents against the use of play because of the lack of emphasis on reading in preparation for

the first grade curriculum. Play establishes and develops the readiness skills required to learn subject matter. When parents pushed for the back to basics movement, they were not allowing their children to learn in a developmentally appropriate manner.

The research had shown that a lack of positive perceptions about the benefits of play in a develolpmentally oriented kindergarten, may have been caused by a variety of educational, governmental, societal/parental and socioeconomic pressures. Parents were unknowingly emphasizing a formalized educational program, instead of accepting the value of developmental learning. Gentile and Hoot (1983) stated that teachers were being manipulated by some parents, to teach using formalized reading programs. They felt that the pressure being exerted by parents resulted in the detraction of play, which is truly necessary in a developmentally oriented kindergarten (Gentile and Hoot, 1983). When this occurred, it was the responsibility of the educator to emphasize the significance of teaching by using age appropriate theories and activities. Webster best expressed this need when she stated, "I teach the child, not the subject!" (Webster, 1984, p. 330).

CHAPTER III

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES AND EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS

Goals and Expectations

The goal of the writer was to create positive parental perceptions towards play in a developmentally oriented kindergarten.

Behavioral Objectives

Eighty percent of the parents who participated in the intervention strategy, demonstrated a 50% increase in positive perceptions about play as measured from the pre-evaluation questionnaire to the post-evaluation questionnaire results.

Fifty percent of the parents who participated in the practicum strategy, answered yes to 80% of the questions asked on the newsletter portion of the post-evaluation questionnaire.

Measurement of Objectives

The evaluation instruments were developed by the writer in the form of an evaluation questionnaire. The evaluation questionnaire consisted of yes/no items and multiple choice questions. The questionnaire was designed as an indicator to whether or not the intervention strategies were successful in creating positive parental perceptions towards play.

Cone, Delawyer and Wolfe (1985) developed an evaluation instrument which assessed specific types of parent involvement. The writer created the evaluation questionnaire by applying Cone, Delawyer and Wolfe's (1985) ideas of measuring various types of involvement reactions made by the parents. The behaviors which the questionnaire measured were all related to the goal of the practicum. The behaviors measured by the questionnaire involved the area of learning through play (Appendix C).

Data Analysis

Each response on the pre-evaluation questionnaire was compared to the response on the corresponding post-evaluation questionnaire. The percentage gains or losses for each item was displayed using a double bar graph histogram to facilitate with the reading and with the interpreting of the results. The graph illustrated the increase in positive perceptions towards play the group made from the pre-evaluation questionnaire to the post-evaluation questionnaire results.

The newsletter survey results were presented as a frequency count. The group scores of the parents were illustrated using a frequency table to compare and contrast the number of positive responses in favor of a newsletter, as opposed to the number of negative

responses against the continuation of a play newsletter. The frequency table demonstrated that the majority of the parents found the newsletter to be beneficial.

CHAPTER IV

SOLUTION STRATEGY

Discussion and Evaluation of Solutions

In the following paragraphs, the writer discussed several different parent involvement strategies. By incorporating a variety of appropriate parent involvement strategies, the writer created positive parental perceptions about play in a developmentally oriented kindergarten curriculum. Parental involvement was necessary if the children were to do well emotionally and academically (Epstein, 1985). Parental involvement demonstrated to the child that his/her parents were both aware and interested in what the child was doing. This helped the child to develop a positive self-concept and to have positive feelings about learning in general.

One possible solution to creating positive parental perceptions about play was to provide a training program for the parents at this public school. Merrell (1985) reported that a training program to assist parents in becoming more skillful and self-assured in the role of parenting was effective. The parent training programs consisted of eight weekly sessions, lasting 90 minutes each. Merrell found this program created a greater parental understanding with regards to appropriate behaviors in their children. This program was an excellent resource to

use. However, the demand of time involved was too great to be considered as an appropriate solution. The parents of these children were unable to attend such a rigid schedule. This was due to the fact that the majority of the parents were both working and were unable to free themselves from their employment responsibilities.

Another possible solution to create positive parental perceptions about play was the use of a newsletter. The Association for Educational Communications and Technology (1979) had found that newsletters were effective instruments in the dissemination of information for parents. A newsletter would provide the parents with activities and resources to improve the parents' perceptions about play in a developmentally oriented kindergarten. The writer believed that the newsletter would be useful if combined with a parent involvement strategy. The newsletter serviced those parents who, due to their life-styles or work habits, would not otherwise be able to participate in any form of parent involvement. The newsletter served as an excellent resource for communicating important facts and information to hard to reach parents.

Home visitations were also found useful in creating positive parental perceptions. Home visits required

that the teacher visit the home on weekends or teacher planning days (Epstein and Becker, 1982). During a home visitation, the teacher discussed topics of concern with the parents. Together, the parents and the teacher reached important decisions and discussed concerns they may have had with regards to the student. They planned together to provide the most developmentally sound program available for the child. This form of parent involvement was not practical to use as a solution strategy. These parents were not home during the weekdays. In addition, the parents used their weekends to catch up on home and family responsibilities. They were not open to the idea of having home visits. A second problem with the solution was that the number of parents involved would be too many to service on an individualized basis. Home visitations were more effective when used to service smaller groups of parents.

Harter and Lodish (1985) found that parent peer groups were very beneficial in helping parents understand how to benefit their children. Peer groups allowed parents to become comfortable with each other, with teachers, and with educational practices (Harter and Lodish, 1985). The parents learned from their peers the appropriate ways in which to deal with their children.

The solution discussed would not have achieved the overall goal of the practicum. The peer groups would have definitely allowed the parents to create a more positive attitude about educational practices, but they would not have sufficed for the information about developmental learning which should be presented in a more explanatory and practical format.

Hawley and Rosenholtz (1984) believed that parents should be included in the formation of their children's readiness and ability to learn. They suggested that parents should be used as a means to support appropriate learning habits in their children. This form of parent education program encouraged parents to become actively involved in their children's academic and social activities. The end result was positive parental perceptions about how their children learn best. Psyzskowski (1989) found that parent education programs were advantageous in enlightening and refreshing parental views about program goals and strategies which are currently used in the classroom. This solution strategy of parent involvement would have been very beneficial in creating positive parental perceptions towards play. The education program needed to be given a flexible time frame in order to best meet the needs of the parents who were involved in this practicum.

A developmentally oriented kindergarten emphasized play as the major resource for cognitive maturation (Moyer, Egertson and Isenber, 1987). Children were not expected to be passive learners. They were encouraged and guided to participate and act upon the environment. Play afforded children the opportunity to use all of their senses as they gathered meaning from their surroundings. If parents were made aware of the benefits of play, educators would have ensured greater positive parent/child interaction as well as created positive parental perceptions about the benefits of play in a developmentally oriented kindergarten program. Moyer, Egertson and Isenberg (1987) believed that parental involvement was necessary if child-centered kindergartens were to achieve their goals of providing developmentally appropriate learning environments.

Description of Selected Solution

After reviewing the discussed solutions, the writer decided to implement a combination of parent play education workshops and a play newsletter to create positive parental perceptions about learning through play. Manning and Boals (1987) believed that every child has the right to play and experience fun while learning. Parents, as well as educators, had the responsibility to nurture and enhance play. For this reason, it was the

responsibility of educators to strive to help parents increase their understanding of the significant role play had in their child's cognitive and emotional development. The use of parent play workshops and play newsletters provided these parents with the opportunity to further expand their understanding and knowledge on the importance of play for children. Parental education and awareness about play was essential if the children were to develop into well adjusted individuals.

The writer felt this combination worked because it allowed the parents to learn how important play was for children, so they may have provided a supportive and insightful influence on the play activities in which their children were participating. By encouraging constructive play activities, the parents were developing not only a cognitively healthy child, but a child who was physically and emotionally secure in the knowledge of who he is. For this reason, educators needed to express the significance of play in children's lives and in all educational programs and objectives which children were exposed to throughout their years of schooling (Isenberg and Quisenberry, 1988).

Goodall (1983) found that regular newsletters assisted parents in initiating conversations and activities with their children, centering on topics

which were being learned in the classroom. A newsletter also served those parents who were both working full time and had little time of their own to spend searching and reading up on literature dealing with the topic of play. Bagin (1985) emphasized that a newsletter carries a wealth of information for all of its readers.

The newsletter dealt with topics, such as child development, developmentally appropriate learning practices, play information, play activities for the home, community play resources and activities, and a problem solving section for concerned parents. This type of format was beneficial for working parents who were interested in learning more about the positive benefits of learning through play. Pyszkowski (1989) discovered that the use of parent newsletters served as a valid information resource when dealing with parents. The Association for Educational Communications and Technology (1979) published a handbook, "How to Produce a Newsletter." The handbook pointed out that a newsletter was a useful way to disseminate information to parents within the school community.

Parent education programs were also found to be a useful strategy in creating positive parental perceptions. Parent education and involvement was linked with children's achievement in school and their

attitude toward learning (Ziegler, 1987). Parent education programs have helped parents understand the significant role they serve in their children's development, both academically and emotionally. When parents showed an interest in what their children were learning and doing, they fostered positive attitudes which were necessary for school learning (Amundson, 1988).

A parent education program would have allowed parents to learn a great deal about the benefits of play in a developmental kindergarten. The parents at this public institution would have benefited by having a program which made accessible to them, a source for obtaining resources and current literature on developmentally appropriate learning practices. Gains and Pegg (1984) suggested that involving parents in educational workshops helps to keep them current on appropriate ways to work with their children. They emphasized that the attitudes parents have about school and learning will ultimately effect their children's views of school and learning (Gains and Pegg, 1984).

The literature then suggested that, in order to create positive parental perceptions about play or any topic, it was essential to increase parental support and involvement. The educator must provide the parents with

as many opportunities and resources as possible to learn and experience first hand, how beneficial play can actually be. Hawley and Rosenholtz (1984) pointed out the significant role a parent has in forming and shaping their children's capacity to acquire knowledge. Parents need to be aware that when they allow their children to play and to become involved with their surroundings, they are fostering developmentally appropriate learning (Elkind, 1986). Parental involvement and awareness were necessary if any type of learning program was to be a success.

Report of Action Taken

The first step taken to provide a solution was to get the approval of the school principal. After a discussion of the identified problem and the proposed solution, the Principal gave the writer full support.

The parents who participated in the practicum were selected on a voluntary basis. The same parent volunteers were involved for the entire implementation phase of the practicum. A total of 122 parents volunteered to participate in the solution strategy.

The plan was to have the parent volunteers who participated in the practicum attend four, 45- to 60-minute workshops which focused on play in the kindergarten and pre-first classrooms. The writer was

responsible for running the workshops. There were guest speakers invited for all four of the workshops. The school library was used as the meeting area for the workshops.

In order for the writer to have the parents' input on the workshops, a workshop evaluation form was developed. The questionnaire consisted of five open-ended questions which asked the parents to evaluate the workshops. The parents were encouraged to offer any suggestions they might have to make the future workshops more informative, interesting, and helpful (Appendix D).

The second part of the solution strategy was to publish a play newsletter. The newsletters were published on a monthly basis. The writer was responsible for all the articles included in the newsletter and for the monthly distribution to the parents. The newsletters included articles on current topics about play in the classroom, play activities for the home, suggested literature on play for the parents, and a Problem-Solving section for parents to ask questions concerning their children (Appendix E). The purpose of the newsletter was two-fold. It provided those parents who could not attend the workshops with a source of monthly information on the benefits of play in the kindergarten and pre-first classrooms. It also provided those parents who did

attend the workshops with additional reinforcement on the benefits of play in the kindergarten and pre-first classroom.

The pre and post-evaluation instruments (Appendix C) used were developed by the writer. The pre and post-evaluation questionnaires each consisted of the same 12 multiple choice questions which related to play in the home and in the school. The first three questions were the focal point of the questionnaire. They inquired as to how important the parents believed play was in the classroom and what percentage of time should be spent on play activities in the classroom. The remaining nine questions dealt with areas of play to be covered in subsequent newsletters and workshops. The purpose of the pre-evaluation questionnaire was to assess the parents' perception and attitudes towards play in the kindergarten and pre-first programs at the beginning of the implementation phase. The pre-evaluation questionnaire was distributed one week before the first newsletter went home. A cover letter was attached to explain to the parents the purpose of the questionnaire and the importance of returning the questionnaire. The writer did not accept any returns after the first newsletter was sent home.

The post-evaluation questionnaire consisted of the same 12 multiple choice questions found on the pre-evaluation questionnaire. The purpose of the post-evaluation questionnaire was to measure the increase in positive parental perceptions and attitudes towards play in a kindergarten and pre-first program. The post-evaluation questionnaire was distributed after the last parent play workshop, which concluded the implementation phase. The parents had two weeks to respond to the questionnaire. No returns were accepted after the two-week period.

In order to determine the benefit of the play newsletter, a newsletter survey was devised by the writer. The newsletter survey consisted of four yes/no questions, which asked the parents if they benefited from the newsletters and if the newsletters should be continued. The survey was distributed along with the post-evaluation questionnaire and was confined to the same time constraints.

The first month of the implementation phase involved the publication of the first Pawsome Play newsletter and the production of the first parent play workshop. The writer selected the theme, "Play and Its Importance During the Early Childhood Years," for both the play newsletter and the workshop.

During the first week, the writer researched the topics to be addressed in the first newsletter. The writer used the County's Professional Library and the state university system's libraries to locate sources of information to be used in the newsletter. The goal of the writer was to publish and distribute the newsletter by every second week of the month. By meeting this deadline every month, the writer was able to notify parents about upcoming events, such as workshops and community activities on a timely basis.

The first month's newsletter defined the topic of "Play." The first section of the newsletter contained a letter to the parents from the principal. The principal addressed the play program and explained to the parents that there would be monthly newsletters and a series of workshops to inform and enlighten the parents about the use of play in the kindergarten and pre-first program.

Two of the articles in the first newsletter addressed the issue of play and how teachers use it effectively in the classroom. The parents learned that the use of learning centers in the classroom was an effective way for children to actively participate in the learning process. Young children learn best when they are allowed to become fully immersed in an activity. The articles also explained that the use of play was the best

way to have young children learn basic concepts and skills necessary for reading, writing, and mathematics.

Another section of the newsletter provided parents with suggested literature to increase their knowledge of play. The writer selected books which dealt with the monthly play theme and topics addressed in the newsletter.

The Play Activities and Play Ideas sections of the newsletter provided the parents with play activities to use at home with their child. These activities were selected because of their value to the central theme of the newsletter.

The Problem-Solving section was introduced in the first newsletter. The writer explained the purpose of this section and invited the parents to send in questions that they would have liked answered in the newsletter.

During the school months, a Curriculum Information section was included in the newsletter. The purpose of this section was to keep the parents informed about monthly classroom activities.

The writer scheduled the first workshop to take place during the fourth week of the first month of implementation. The purpose of the first workshop was to introduce the topic of "Play in Learning" to the kindergarten and pre-first parents. The areas to be

covered in this play workshop included age characteristics of kindergarten and pre-first age children, the county mandates for developmentally appropriate kindergarten and pre-first programs, and the school's use of play in the learning process for kindergarten and pre-first programs.

During the first week of the first month, the writer consulted with the principal on the topic for the workshop and discussed the areas to be addressed. The writer then contacted the Early Childhood Department for the county and requested a guest speaker with expertise in the area of play and learning. The county provided the writer with a guest speaker and a date for the workshop was scheduled.

Also during the first week, the writer applied for a county grant to provide the necessary funding for the play program. The funding from the grant provided for the printing of the newsletter, the cost of mailing the summer newsletters, childcare during the workshops, refreshments for the workshop, and for handouts to be distributed to the parents at the workshops. Since approval and funding of the grant took four to six weeks, the writer approached the Parent Teacher Organization for funds to provide childcare, refreshments, and parent handouts for the first workshop. The Parent Teacher

Organization agreed to the funding of refreshments and handouts for the workshop and offered parent volunteers to provide childcare.

The writer contacted the guest speaker during the third week of the first month to discuss the speaker's agenda and what the writer would like the speaker to address. The writer and guest speaker reached an agreement on the topics to be covered during the workshop and verified the scheduled date and time for the workshop.

Also, during the third week, the writer prepared three flyers (Appendix F) to be sent home with the students. The flyers informed the parents as to the date, time, location, and topic of the first workshop. The flyers also let the parents know that childcare would be provided. The first flyer was sent home during this week.

During the third week, the writer also contacted the Early Childhood Department for the county and requested information on possible parent handouts for the first play workshop. The county sent the writer copies of all available handouts which dealt with the topic of "Play and Learning." The writer chose those handouts which dealt specifically with the topic to be covered in the first play workshop and ordered them from the county.

During the fourth week of the first month, the writer sent home the remaining flyers and held the first play workshop. Since the workshop was held on Thursday of that week, a flyer was sent home on Monday and Wednesday. The writer received the handouts from the county on the Tuesday before the workshop.

The workshop was scheduled to begin at 6:30 p.m. The guest speaker and the writer both arrived at 6:00 p.m. to go over all last minute details.

The writer began the workshop with an overview of the play program to be provided during the eight months of implementation. The writer then focused on the philosophy of the school towards play and learning and emphasized the use of developmentally age appropriate curriculum in the classroom.

The writer introduced the guest speaker and turned the workshop over to her. The guest speaker began her discussion by explaining developmentally age appropriate characteristics for kindergarten and pre-first children. She used examples of typical 4 to 6 1/2 year-old behavior patterns to demonstrate to the parents that their child's actions are not abnormal. Many of the parents seemed to be relieved to find out that their children were "normal."

The speaker next addressed the philosophy of the county on age appropriate learning. She provided the parents with a brief history on how the county arrived at its philosophy on play and why the county stands behind its view on learning through the use of play. She cited both past and present research to reinforce the county's viewpoints on play and learning.

The final area covered by the speaker was the use of play in the classroom. She gave examples of play activities and explained what the children learned by doing these activities. She then addressed what the parents should expect to find in the average developmentally oriented kindergarten and pre-first classroom.

The speaker closed her portion of the workshop by providing the parents with a question and answer session. The writer also answered specific questions which dealt with the use of play in their child's classroom. The writer limited the question and answer session to a maximum of 15 minutes.

The writer concluded the workshop by explaining and handing out the workshop evaluation form. The parents were directed toward the information table where the handouts on play were located. They were invited to take any or all available handouts home to read at their

convenience. The writer thanked the parents and guest speaker for their participation and the workshop was closed.

The second month of implementation involved the publication and distribution of the second play newsletter. During the first week of the month, the writer gathered literature and information on the topic to be addressed in the newsletter. The purpose of the second newsletter was to show how social and emotional development was promoted through the use of play. The writer made use of the County Professional Library and the state university system's libraries to obtain the information to be used in the newsletter. Also, during the first week, the writer collected the parent workshop evaluation forms from the first workshop and identified areas of strengths and weaknesses. The general concensus among the parents was that the workshop met their expectations, the material was clearly presented, and the guest speaker was well informed and interesting. The majority of the parents felt that the highlight of the workshop was the guest speaker's descriptions of age appropriate behaviors and learning that their child's behaviors were normal. Some of the parents expressed that without the childcare, they would not have been able to attend the workshop. Two weaknesses found by those

parents who attended the workshop were (a) the insufficient use of hands-on activities and (b) the late start in the school year of the play program. The writer then planned to include hands-on activities in subsequent workshops.

During the second week of the second month of implementation, the writer published and distributed the second play newsletter. The topic of the second newsletter dealt with "Social and Emotional Development Through the Use of Play."

Two of the articles in the newsletter explained to the parents what make-believe and dramatic play were and the purpose they served in the classroom. The use of this form of play promoted language and communication skills as well as overall emotional well being.

The writer provided the parents with three play activities which promoted the use of make-believe and dramatic play. These activities allowed the parents to use everyday items found in the home as tools to enhance their child's make-believe playtime. The play activities demonstrated to the parents that something as simple as a cardboard box could become a cave or a tent for their child's make-believe playtime.

The function of the housekeeping center in the classroom was discussed in another article of the

newsletter. It was explained that the housekeeping center promoted the social skills needed to be successful in adult life. When children played at the housekeeping center, they experienced activities that were designed to develop their self-esteem and to create positive feelings towards learning.

The writer included a section with titles of suggested literature for the parents to read. The books offered the parents additional information on make-believe play and social development. The writer also included titles of children's books which were conducive to social and dramatic play.

The first question submitted for the Problem-Solving section of the newsletter was answered by the writer. The Problem-Solving section addressed developmental age characteristics of six-year-olds. The writer referenced the Gesell developmental stages to answer this question. The last article of the newsletter was a letter from the school's Guidance Committee. The Committee discussed self-esteem and its role in helping children develop effective relationships, accept responsibilities, and ultimately perform better in the classroom.

During the third week of the second month, the writer was awarded a grant to fund the play program. The writer then contacted the National Association for the

Education of Young Children (NAEYC) to order additional handouts for the parent workshops.

Also, during the third week, the writer decided upon a theme for the second workshop. The theme chosen for the second workshop was "The Use of Critical Thinking in Play." The writer contacted a guest speaker, who was an expert in the field of critical thinking, and set up a date and time for the second workshop.

During the fourth week of the second month, the writer contacted the coordinator of the Thinking Skills Department for the county to obtain any available information and handouts that the writer could use for the workshop. The coordinator sent copies of a newsletter to be handed out to the parents and also provided ideas for play activities which promoted critical thinking skills to be demonstrated at the second workshop.

During the first week of the third month, the writer researched the information to be used in the third play newsletter. The topic chosen for the newsletter was "Critical Thinking in Play." The writer used the County's Professional Library and the state university system's libraries to obtain the information to be used in the newsletter.

During the second week of the third month of implementation, the writer published and distributed the third newsletter. The first article in the newsletter defined critical thinking and how play is a natural vehicle to use to enhance critical thinking skills.

The writer included a section in the newsletter which offered suggestions to the parents on ways to encourage critical thinking in the home environment. The section showed the parents that reinforcing thinking skills could be as easy as listening to what their child had to tell them, asking positive questions about their child's activities both at home and school, and reading to their child everyday.

The writer included a section which explained the use of manipulatives in the learning process. A child will better grasp a concept when the material is presented concretely through the use of hands-on materials.

The writer also included play activities and ideas for the parents to use at home which stressed the use of critical thinking in play. The play activities presented not only promoted critical thinking but also provided a fun way for the parent and child to interact.

The writer provided suggested reading materials which emphasized the use of thinking skills in play. The

titles listed offered more in-depth information on thinking skills and included titles of activity books which the parents could use at home.

The final section of the newsletter, the Problem-Solving section, addressed developmental age. The kindergarteners at this location were just administered the Gesell Developmental Test and the parents asked for further clarification on the term developmental age. The writer referenced the definition for developmental age from the Gesell Developmental Exam Scoring Notes.

During the second week of the third month, the writer received a cancellation from the guest speaker. The writer asked the guest speaker for assistance in finding an alternate speaker. The guest speaker recommended a colleague who was also an expert in the field of critical thinking and made arrangements for the writer to contact this person. The writer then contacted the new guest speaker and verified the date and time of the second workshop.

During the third week of the month, the writer prepared three flyers which announced the date, the time, and the topic of the second workshop. The first flyer was sent home during this week.

Also, during the third week, the writer approached the principal on the possibility of organizing a parent

library on play in learning. The writer explained that the parents had difficulty locating the recommended readings from the suggested literature section of the newsletter. The principal agreed and funds were allocated for the parent library. The writer presented a list of books to be purchased to the principal. The books were purchased and a special parent section was set up in the library.

The writer contacted the guest speaker during the third week to review the topics to be addressed during the second workshop. An agreement was reached between the writer and the guest speaker as to the content for the workshop. The writer then reverified the date and time.

During the fourth week, the writer sent home a flyer on the Monday and Wednesday prior to the workshop. The workshop was held on Thursday evening at 6:30 p.m. The writer and guest speaker arrived at 6:00 p.m. to review any last minute details.

The theme for the second workshop was "Critical Thinking in Play." The writer introduced the concept of critical thinking and how children use it during play. The writer then introduced the guest speaker and turned the workshop over to her.

The guest speaker defined the term critical thinking. She then explained how parents could use critical thinking at home to help their children succeed in life. She gave examples of play activities to be used at home which stressed critical thinking. She told the parents that critical thinking activities could be as easy as sorting laundry by size or color and discussing with the child why they sorted the clothes as they did.

The guest speaker then reviewed how teachers use critical thinking in the classroom and how play is a vehicle for enhancing thinking skills. She explained how teachers read stories to children and lead them into thought provoking discussions about the story. For example, the teacher might have asked the child to retell the story in their own words or to create a new ending for a story.

The workshop was then opened up to a question and answer period. The writer mediated this portion of the workshop and limited it to a 10-minute time frame.

Following the question and answer period, the writer provided the parents with hands-on demonstrations of critical thinking activities. Three demonstration centers were set up for the parents to interact with. Each activity was demonstrated for the parents by the writer. The parents were then encouraged to try out the

activities. They were given a step-by-step guide sheet so that they could recreate the activities at home with their children. The writer allowed 20 minutes for this session of the workshop.

The writer closed the workshop by telling the parents about the new parent library and the checkout procedure to be used. The workshop evaluation forms were distributed and the parents were encouraged to fill them out and return them as soon as possible. The writer also encouraged the parents to take home any and all workshop handouts. The writer thanked the guest speaker and parents for coming and the workshop was ended.

During the first week of the fourth month of implementation, the writer researched the articles to be included in the fourth newsletter. The writer chose "Language Development" as the topic for the newsletter. The writer used both the County Professional Library and the state university system's libraries to obtain the information to be included in the newsletter.

Also, during the first week, the writer reviewed the workshop evaluation forms from the second workshop. All the parents who attended the workshop agreed that the workshop met their expectations and the material was presented clearly. They also agreed that the speaker was well informed and that the examples she gave were easy to

follow through at home with their children. The majority of the parents agreed that the highlight of the workshop was the activity demonstrations presented by the writer. The parents also felt that the activities and ideas presented by the guest speaker would help them to interact better with their children at home. No negative evaluations were given; however, some of the parents expressed that they wished the program had started at the beginning of the school year, so that they could have applied the information learned at the workshops earlier.

During the second week, the writer published and distributed the fourth play newsletter. The first article in the newsletter explained what the term language development meant and how to encourage its use in the home. The writer also explained how teachers use play to promote language development in the classroom. The writer stressed the importance of communication between the parent and the child. The writer made reference to Lucy Mitchell (1948), author of The Here and Now Storybook, who said, "There is no better play material in the world than words."

The writer included two sections, Play Activities and Play Ideas, which stressed language development. The activities promoted the use of oral language skills. The writer showed the parents that something as easy as

having their child retell the experience of their last trip to the zoo not only promoted language development but improved the communication skills between the parent and the child.

The writer also stressed to the parents the importance of reading aloud to their child and included a section on How to Read Aloud Effectively. The writer pointed out that reading aloud encourages the development of a curiosity and an appreciation to learn. The writer went on to include suggestions for the setting, mood, and the type of story and length which created an environment conducive to language development.

The writer provided a section with suggested titles for further reading. The titles selected emphasized the use of language development and communication. They provided the parents with further play activities for language development to use at home.

The final section of the newsletter was the Problem-Solving section. This section explained the pre-first program because many of the kindergarten parents had misconceptions about placement in the pre-first program. The writer referenced the book, Questions Parents Ask, (Ames, 1988) to explain that the main function of the pre-first program was to allow the

child time to mature, so that they have a better chance at success in first grade.

During the fourth week, the writer contacted the guest speakers for the third workshop. The theme of the third workshop was "The Importance of Outside Play." The writer planned to have two guest speakers for the workshop. The supervisor for Elementary Physical Education Department in the county was to address the importance of physical activity in the learning process. The writer also contacted the local spokesperson for community activities to address upcoming events which the parents might want to attend with their children. A date and a time was selected for the workshop and verified with both guest speakers. During this time, the writer also contacted the Physical Education Department and requested all appropriate parent handouts on outside play and physical education to be sent to the writer's work location.

During the first week of the fifth month of implementation, the writer researched articles to be used in the fifth newsletter. The topic covered in the fifth newsletter was "Fine Motor Development." The writer made use of both the County's Professional Library and the state university system's libraries to obtain the information needed for the fifth newsletter.

The writer published and distributed the newsletter during the second week of the month. The first article of the newsletter defined fine motor development and how teachers use play to develop fine motor skills. The writer discussed how the use of play materials, such as puzzles, legos, blocks, clay, and lacing cards increased small muscle coordination.

Another article in the newsletter discussed the use of fingerplays to develop fine motor skills. The writer provided the parents with examples of fingerplays and suggestions on how to use them. The writer pointed out that fingerplays not only increase fine motor development, but they also enhance language development.

The writer presented two play activities and play ideas which stressed fine motor development. The play activity described a fingerplay called "Red Apples," which was written by B. R. Baker (1989). The fingerplay encouraged the child and the parent to make use of their fine motor muscles. It also promoted language development by having the child discuss and describe the apple. The Play Ideas section involved the use of dough to strengthen fine motor coordination. The writer provided the parents with various dough recipes and with ideas and activities on how to use the dough to promote fine motor development.

The writer provided a section with suggested titles for further reading. The titles listed all dealt with fine motor development in play. They also provided the parents with play activities which encouraged fine motor development.

The final article of the newsletter contained the Problem-Solving section. This section was a follow-up to last month's problem-solving question about the pre-first program. The parents were concerned with the possibility of a stigma being attached to those children placed in a pre-first program. The writer referred to Questions Parents Ask (Ames, 1988) to explain that the program develops a positive self-concept within the child; and, consequently, any initial negative feelings are counteracted by the child's increased positive self-concept.

During the third week of the fifth month of implementation, the writer prepared three flyers which notified the parents of the date, the time, and the topic of the third workshop. The first flyer was sent home during this week.

The writer contacted the guest speakers during the third week to review the topics to be addressed for the third workshop. An agreement was reached between the writer and the guest speaker from the community, as to

the content of the slide presentation for the workshop. The writer then verified the date and time with the community spokesperson. The writer also contacted the supervisor for Elementary Physical Education Department to verify and review the topics to be addressed during the third workshop. The supervisor informed the writer that due to a family emergency, the speaker would be unable to attend. The writer tried to find a replacement speaker but was unsuccessful. Since the writer was unable to find a replacement for the guest speaker, the writer decided to address the parents on the importance of outside play in learning. The writer researched the topic and contacted the Physical Education Department to obtain information on the county's philosophy towards outside play in learning. The Physical Education Department provided the writer with a video presentation which enumerated the county's philosophy on outside play in learning. The writer screened the video and decided to incorporate it into the writer's presentation.

During the fourth week, the writer sent home a flyer on the Monday and Wednesday prior to the workshop. The workshop was held on Thursday evening at 6:30 p.m. The writer and guest speaker arrived at 6:00 p.m. to review any last minute details.

The theme for the third workshop was, "The Importance of Outside Play in Learning." The writer started with a brief overview of the physical education program and the philosophy of the school system on outside play in learning. The writer then showed the county's video which stressed the need for daily physical education. The video presentation explained how children learn through the use of outside play and encouraged daily physical activity as a means to stimulate the learning process. At the conclusion of the video, the writer re-emphasized the major points presented in the video. The writer then introduced the community guest speaker.

The guest speaker began her session with a slide presentation on outdoor activities offered by the community and upcoming events of interest which promoted family togetherness. The guest speaker promoted outside activities sponsored by the community, such as sports, gymnastics, and dance for the children to participate in.

The workshop was then opened up to a question and answer session. The writer mediated this portion of the workshop and limited it to a 10-minute time frame.

Following the question and answer session, the writer provided the parents with the opportunity to make and take games home with them. All six kindergarten and

pre-first teachers presented one of their favorite games for the parents. The teachers explained how to construct each game and how each game should be played for maximum effective learning enjoyment. This portion of the workshop was limited to a 20-minute session.

The writer concluded the workshop by encouraging the parents to take home any and all available handouts. The writer distributed the workshop evaluation forms and asked the parents to return them as soon as possible. The writer thanked the guest speaker, teachers, and parents for coming and the workshop was ended.

During the first week of the sixth month of implementation, the writer researched the information to be used in the sixth newsletter. The writer selected the theme of "Gross Motor Development" for the newsletter. The writer made use of both the County's Professional Library and the state university system's libraries to obtain the needed information to be used in the newsletter.

Also, during the first week, the writer reviewed the workshop evaluation forms from the third workshop. The parents agreed that the workshop met their expectations and that the material was clearly presented. The parents also agreed that the guest speaker was informative. The parents found the "make and take" portion of the workshop

to be the highlight. The parents were excited about being able to make games for their children. The parents also expressed that they would take advantage of the community sponsored activities and events presented to them by the community guest speaker.

During the second week of the month, the writer published and distributed the sixth newsletter. The topic of discussion for the sixth newsletter was "Gross Motor Development." The first article defined motor development and how the use of play activities, such as jumping rope, roller skating, walking on a balance beam, and playing on a jungle gym strengthen the gross motor muscles. It was explained in the article that physical education in kindergarten and the pre-first programs promote these types of activities to stimulate gross motor development.

Two of the articles in the newsletter provided the parents with play activities and play ideas to enhance their child's gross motor development. The Play Activities section defined static balance and helped the parents to understand that it was needed in order for their child to coordinate their movements. The writer provided examples of various balancing games that could be played at home. The Play Ideas section provided games

which would encourage the child to use all of the muscles found in the large muscle group.

Another article of the newsletter provided the parents with titles for suggested readings on the topic of gross motor development. The suggested titles provided the parents with play activities which they could use at home.

The Problem-Solving section of the newsletter addressed how parents could encourage their child's creativity. The writer recommended that the parents should be supportive of all their child's creative endeavors. This support would enhance the child's feeling of self-importance.

The sixth newsletter was the first of three summer newsletters. The Curriculum section was replaced by a Community News section which provided the parents with news of upcoming community events that might have been of interest to the parents.

During the first week of the seventh month of implementation, the writer researched the information needed for the articles to be included in the seventh newsletter. The writer chose "Outside Play" as the topic for the seventh newsletter. The writer selected this topic to promote the significance of outside play during the summer months. The writer made use of both the

County's Professional Library and the state university system's libraries to obtain the needed information for the articles in the newsletter.

During the second week, the writer published and distributed the newsletter. Since the school was closed during the summer months, the writer mailed the newsletters to the children's homes. The first article of the newsletter defined outside play and the benefits children could experience when they participated in outside play. The writer explained that outside play not only enhanced neuromuscular development, but also taught social skills which are necessary life skills. Children could become more physically healthy and emotionally relaxed when they are allowed to release their pent-up energies through outside play.

Two other articles in the newsletter provided the parents with play activities and play ideas. The activities and ideas were designed to get the children outside and to make use of their fine and gross motor skills while enjoying the outdoors.

The writer provided titles of suggested literature for the parents to read and to become more informed about outside play. The titles also provided the parents with activities and games, which they could play with their

children that enhanced both the fine and the gross motor skills of their children.

The last article of the newsletter contained the Problem-Solving section. The parents were concerned that their children demonstrated selfishness and were overly possessive of their toys. The parents wanted to know how to teach their children to share. The writer explained that children, at this stage of their life, learned best through imitation of others' actions. The writer recommended that the parents provide their children with examples of how to share. The parents should over-dramatize their examples of sharing to stimulate their child's desire to imitate the appropriate behavior.

During the fourth week, the writer contacted the guest speaker for the final parent workshop. The workshop covered "The Continued Use of Play in the First Grade Classroom." The writer set up a date and time for the workshop and verified it with the guest speaker.

During the first week of the eighth month of implementation, the writer researched the articles to be used in the eighth newsletter. The topic covered by the newsletter dealt with the selection and the use of age appropriate play materials. The writer used both the County's Professional Library and the state university

system's libraries to obtain the necessary information for the newsletter.

During the second week, the writer published and distributed the final newsletter. The writer produced three flyers which announced the final workshop and included the first one with the newsletter. Since the school was closed because of summer break, the writer mailed the newsletter and the flyer to the children's homes.

The first article in the newsletter discussed the importance of quality play materials for children and their significance in the school setting. It was explained that play materials add to a child's creative and intellectual skills by stimulating their desire to learn. The article emphasized the need for the parents to be informed consumers when they purchase play materials. The writer followed this article with suggestions on how to purchase safe, constructive, and developmentally age appropriate toys.

Two other articles in the newsletter provided the parents with play activities and play ideas that could be used at home. The Play Activities section gave ideas to the parents on ways to make games out of simple, throw away materials, such as milk cartons, toilet paper rolls, and egg cartons. The Play Ideas section provided a game

which required parent/child interaction as they worked together to accomplish a prescribed goal established by the game.

Another article of the newsletter provided the parents with titles for suggested readings on the topic of age appropriate play materials. The recommended titles provided the parents with further information on how to select and purchase safe, age appropriate play materials for their children.

The Problem-Solving section of the newsletter addressed what activities are best suited for children over the summer months. The writer recommended activities which would allow the child to interact with the outdoors. The writer also suggested activities which the whole family could participate in.

During the third week, the writer contacted the guest speaker to discuss the content of the final workshop and to reverify the date and time. The guest speaker informed the writer that the elementary education generalist for the county had volunteered to assist her during her presentation. The writer and the guest speaker agreed upon the topics to be addressed at the workshop. The writer invited the first grade team to participate at the workshop and invited the Grade Chairman to speak to the parents and introduce the first

grade team. Also, during the third week, the writer contacted the Early Childhood Department for the county and requested any and all handouts on the topic of developmentally age appropriate play materials for the first grade program.

During the fourth week, the writer sent home the remaining flyers to remind the parents of the upcoming workshop. The workshop was held on Thursday evening at 7:00 p.m. in the school library. The writer and guest speakers arrived at 6:30 p.m. to review any last minute details.

The writer started the workshop by giving a brief overview of the first grade program and how play is an integral part of the first grade program. The writer introduced the guest speakers and turned the workshop over to them.

The first guest speaker reviewed the age characteristics of six and seven-year-olds. She explained that children at this age are more capable of sitting for a longer period of time and they are ready to begin reading and writing. She pointed out that they like to participate in dramatic play and they enjoy telling tall tales. They are very sensitive of the world around them and they are subject to changing emotional swings. The speaker went on to say that play is an

important part of these children's lives and must be included in the school curriculum to fully develop the whole child. The speaker then addressed the county's philosophy on play and its use in the first grade curriculum.

The second guest speaker discussed the first grade curriculum and how play is used in the classroom. She explained that the first grade program still made use of learning centers and small group instruction. She emphasized that first grade teachers used play activities to reinforce concepts in reading, writing, and arithmetic. The speaker finished her portion of the lecture by making the parents aware of what should be found in the first grade classroom.

The workshop was then opened up to a question and answer session. The writer mediated this portion of the workshop and limited it to a 10-minute time frame.

The writer introduced the grade chairman of the first grade team who introduced the first grade teachers to the parents. The writer encouraged the parents to take any and all available handouts home with them. The writer thanked the guest speakers, the first grade team, and the parents for participating in the program and closed the final workshop.

The writer sent home the post-evaluation questionnaire and the newsletter survey the day after the final workshop. A cover letter was attached to the questionnaire which asked the parents to answer the questionnaire and survey and to return them as soon as possible. For the parents' convenience, the writer provided a self-addressed, stamped envelope for the parents to return the questionnaire and survey. The writer allowed the parents two weeks to respond and no responses were accepted after the deadline date.

CHAPTER V

RESULTS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Results

This practicum was designed to create positive parental perceptions towards play in a developmentally oriented kindergarten and pre-first program. The parents' perceptions about play were measured by using a play questionnaire developed by the writer. The value of the newsletter was measured by a newsletter survey. The results from the play pretest questionnaire demonstrated a need for the implementation strategy. One hundred twenty-two kindergarten and pre-first parents participated in this practicum. The parents received monthly newsletters and were given the opportunity to attend bi-monthly workshops. The standards of performance were a 50% increase in positive perceptions toward play in a developmentally oriented kindergarten program by 80% of the parents who participated in the program; and 50% of the parents would answer yes to 80% of the questions asked in the newsletter survey.

The first objective was to show a 50% increase in positive perceptions towards play in a developmentally oriented kindergarten program as measured by the results of the pre and post-evaluation questionnaire. The writer had originally planned to use a double bar graph

histogram to facilitate with the reading and interpreting of the results, but due to the large numbers of parents who participated in the practicum, the writer chose to use a chart which showed the percentage gains in positive perceptions made by each parent. The writer also included a scatter graph to facilitate with the reading and interpreting of the results.

The Parents' Percentage Gain Chart (Appendix G) listed each parent's pre and post-evaluation questionnaire test scores and the percentage gain in positive perceptions towards play in a developmental kindergarten and pre-first classroom. The table showed that 107 of the 122 parents who participated in the practicum achieved a 50% or greater gain in positive parental perceptions towards play.

The scatter graph of the Pre and Posttest Gains Made by Parents (Appendix H) illustrated the percentage gains made by the parents from the pre to the post-evaluation questionnaire. The graph showed that 107 of the parents were on or above the 50% gain line and only 15 of the parents were below the 50% gain line. A total of 87.7% of the parents who participated in the practicum achieved the writer's first objective. The parents surpassed the writer's stated percentage of mastery.

The second objective anticipated that 50% of the parents who participated in the practicum would answer yes to 80% of the questions in the newsletter survey. The writer originally intended to illustrate the information on a frequency table, but decided to use a pie graph for appearance sake. The pie graph showed a better pictorial presentation of all the parents who participated in the practicum and was easier for the reader to interpret the results.

The newsletter survey consisted of four yes/no questions. The parents needed to answer yes to all of the questions to achieve the 80% goal set by the writer. A total of 116 out of 122 parents answered yes to all of the questions on the newsletter survey. The Newsletter Survey Results pie graph (Appendix I) showed that 95% of the parents answered yes to all of the questions and only 5% of the parents answered no to one or more of the survey questions. The results showed that the parents mastered the writer's second objective.

Conclusions

The practicum results indicate that the implementation strategy was successful in creating positive parental perceptions towards play in a developmental kindergarten and pre-first program. A total of 87.7% of the parents involved in the practicum

achieved a 50% or greater gain in positive perceptions towards play after the implementation of an eight-month parent education program which involved monthly newsletters and bi-monthly workshops. Research done by Black and Puckett (1986) found that workshops and newsletters were valuable instruments when used to inform parents about developmentally appropriate practices and to influence the parents' attitudes towards these practices. Consequently, the notion that parents' attitudes and perceptions about play in learning can be positively influenced by the use of newsletters and workshops is supported by research and by the results of this practicum.

The first objective dealt with the creation of positive parental perceptions towards play in learning. A total of 87.7% of the parents who participated in the practicum achieved a 50% or more gain in positive perceptions towards play in learning.

The workshops and newsletters were important to the parent education strategy because they provided all the parents, who were involved in the practicum, the opportunity to learn about developmentally appropriate learning practices. The bar graph of the pre and post-evaluation questionnaire results (Appendix J) clearly showed that the parents increased their knowledge

about developmentally appropriate learning practices. For each question on the pre and post-evaluation questionnaire, the bar graph tallied the number of parents who answered each question correctly.

The first three questions on the pre and post-evaluation questionnaires were the most important indicators of the parents' perceptions about developmentally appropriate learning practices, at the time that the questionnaires were completed by the parents. These questions dealt with the parents' perceptions and attitudes towards play in the learning process and how much time they felt their child should be playing in the classroom. On the pre-evaluation questionnaire, only 38.5% of the parents answered Question #1 correctly, 5.7% of the parents answered Question #2 correctly, and 22.1% of the parents answered Question #3 correctly. Because of the educational workshops and newsletters, the number of parents who correctly answered the first three questions on the post-evaluation questionnaire increased significantly. On the post-evaluation questionnaire, 88.5% of the parents answered Question #1 correctly, 90.2% of the parents answered Question #2 correctly, and 86.0% answered Question #3 correctly. Epstein (1986) suggested that parents who were given adequate education and

guidance about the classroom curriculum and the goals of the school program were more supportive and accepting of the school's program. The significant increase of correct answers for the first three questions on the post-evaluation questionnaire showed that the parents' attitudes and perceptions about developmentally appropriate learning practices changed to a more positive and accepting attitude.

The use of parent workshops was an important tool for educating parents about developmentally appropriate practices in a kindergarten and pre-first program. Hinton (1986) found that workshops, which educated parents about the school curriculum, gained parental support and understanding for the curriculum. Seeley (1989) explained that parent workshops increased parent participation within the school and helped change the parents' views on the educational program provided by the school. Parent education and the use of workshops were paramount in influencing parents' views and beliefs about the curriculum taught in the school.

The use of guest speakers was an important part of the parent workshops. The guest speakers provided the parents with expert views and opinions on current issues in the field of early childhood education. Fredricks and Rasinski (1990) emphasized that guest speakers have

tremendous influences on the parents' attitudes and *perceptions towards the school program*. The guest speakers helped the parents to build confidence in their ability to help their children learn in developmentally appropriate ways. Epstein (1986) suggested that when workshops create confidence in the parents' ability to help their child, the parents' support and understanding of the school program increases.

The writer found that special services, such as childcare, parent handouts, and supplies were conducive to creating an overall positive mood about the workshops. By providing childcare, many of the parents who might not have been able to participate were able to attend the workshops. The parent handouts and supplies were useful because they reinforced information and skills learned by the parents during the workshops. Fredricks and Rasinski (1990) believed that providing parents with special services at workshops influenced the parents' attitudes towards the workshops and the school program.

The use of make-and-take sessions during the workshops allowed the parents to actively participate in the workshops and to become involved in their child's learning. Fredricks and Rasinski (1990) found that make-and-take workshops allowed the parents to become actively involved with the workshops and changed their

attitudes about the learning process. A handbook developed by the Louisiana State Department of Education (1988) emphasized that workshops which provided make-and-take sessions assisted parents in becoming aware of the importance of working with their children at home and in shaping the parents' attitudes about learning in general. The make-and-take sessions not only provided the parents with useful information, but also made the workshop more enjoyable.

The use of newsletters to increase positive parental perceptions towards play in the learning process was significant because it provided the parents with readily available sources of information on the use of play in learning at school and at home. Cook (1986) believed that newsletters are a viable communications instrument because they are generally read thoroughly by the parents, they transmit meaningful information, and they are an attitude-shaping medium whereby the feelings of the readers can be intentionally influenced. Nelson (1986) found that newsletters were an effective way of transmitting information to the parents and helped change the parents' perceptions and attitudes towards learning.

The newsletters provided the parents with play ideas and play activities which helped them interact in developmentally appropriate ways with their child.

Epstein (1986) found that parents who were provided with learning activities to do at home responded positively to the teaching practices of the school and were more aware of the child's instructional program. The purpose of the program was to educate the parents on the practice of developmentally appropriate learning as well as to make them aware of how children learn best. The newsletters allowed the writer to accomplish this goal.

The second objective stated that 50% of the parents would answer yes to 80% of the newsletter survey questions. The survey questions were designed to see how effective the parents felt the newsletter met their needs. A total of 95% of the parents answered yes to 80% of the survey questions.

The pie graph in Appendix K showed the percentage of parents who answered yes and no to each of the four survey questions. At least 95% of the parents answered yes to each of the four questions on the survey. The overwhelming majority of the parents felt that the newsletters were beneficial and wanted to see the continued publication of the newsletter. Fredricks and Rasinski (1990) found that parents who were provided with written information over an extended period of time became reliant on the information to effectively fulfill their children's needs. The researchers also found that

newsletters influenced the way the parents perceived the school curriculum. By providing the parents with a newsletter every month during the eight months of the implementation phase, the writer not only positively changed the parents' attitudes and perceptions about play in learning but also enhanced the interpersonal skills between the parent and child.

In conclusion, the writer believes that parent education about developmentally appropriate learning practices in the kindergarten program should be an integral part of early childhood education. This is especially significant in those schools where parents have a history of mandating academic learning instead of allowing the children to learn in developmentally appropriate ways. In a position statement made by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (1987), it was noted that parents who have misconceptions about how young children learn and who try to apply adult education standards to the early childhood curriculum, may pressure early childhood programs to stress academic development instead of developmentally appropriate learning practices. It is essential that these parents be educated on the use of developmentally appropriate learning at the beginning of the school year. A program which consists of monthly newsletters and bi-monthly

workshops should be instituted to help parents become aware of the benefits of play in learning. It is important that the teachers, the parents, and the school work together to provide the child with a developmentally appropriate learning environment.

Recommendations

1. This parent education program should be provided as a major component of the Early Childhood Curriculum throughout the Primary grades.

2. The parent program should start at the beginning of the school year. The first workshop should be held within the first month of initiating the parent education program.

3. During every parent workshop, a make-and-take session should be provided to enhance the parents' knowledge.

4. The parents should be allowed, as often as convenient for the teacher and parent, to observe their child learning through the use of play in a classroom setting.

5. The school should make available a parent library for the parents to locate valuable resources and information on how to best help their child learn in a developmentally appropriate manner.

Dissemination

The dissemination plans of the writer are as follows:

1. The practicum report will be submitted to the Early Childhood Department for the county. The writer will provide assistance and guidance in the event that they wish to implement such a program in other schools.

2. The writer will provide a copy for the County Professional Library, in the school district where this practicum took place, so that other professionals may see the benefits of helping parents understand the importance of developmentally oriented learning programs.

3. A copy of the practicum will be submitted to the Archdiocese of Miami, so that they can help their parents learn about the benefits of developmentally oriented programs.

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APPENDIX A

Interview Transcript

This conversation took place between the principal and the writer. The following transcript is the principal's responses to the interview. This transcript will serve to document this public school's problem as real.

Writer:

Describe the operation of the school.

Principal:

Decisions are made ultimately by me with input from the staff. I would like to eventually establish joint decision-making processes, where the faculty is involved in all phases of the operation of the school. The majority of our funds go to paying the teachers' salaries. Textbooks and other resources are payed for on the basis of our student enrollment. In essence, SACS dictates the needs for our budget expenditures.

Writer:

Does the school provide a developmentally appropriate kindergarten program?

Principal:

Yes, not only at the kindergarten level but we also have a prefirst level. At the kindergarten level we

APPENDIX A

offer the basic developmental program. The teachers stress the importance of not pushing the formalized academics, such as reading.

Writer:

Are the children encouraged to play or is there a greater emphasis on formalized instruction?

Principal:

I always stress to the kindergarten teachers, the importance of play for young children. However, I also do not want to see children running around causing havoc, but guided play which promotes an excellent learning environment.

Writer:

Do the parents expect mostly formalized instruction to be provided by the program?

Principal:

The majority of the parents do not understand the developmental approach of learning through the use of play. I have had several parents approach me on that same topic.

Writer:

What has been done to enlighten the parents about the significance of play during the early childhood years?

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Principal:

I have tried to have all of the kindergarten teachers become trained Gesell examiners so that they may better express the need for a developmental curriculum to the parents. I would expect that during parent/teacher conferences the topic of play is stressed and defended by the teachers.

Writer:

Has any type of program been developed to help remediate this situation?

Principal:

I must be honest and say no. We just recently opened the school and have not approached this topic with our parents.

Writer:

If not, do you feel the parents and the school would benefit by receiving information on the benefits of play?

Principal:

Yes, most definitely. The parents would gain a deeper understanding about developmental learning.

APPENDIX A

Writer:

Do you have a program which follows up through the summer months with activities and information for the parents?

Principal:

No, there is no such program available for the parents' use.

Writer:

Do you feel that the parents would develop a more accepting attitude towards play if they knew more about it?

Principal:

Definitely, they would understand how children learn.

Writer:

Would it be accurate to describe the circumstances as two-fold: the parents need to be made aware of the significance of play, as well as the need to continue developing positive perceptions towards play during the summer months?

Principal:

Yes, it would benefit the school and the parents.

APPENDIX B

TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

Survey results of the six kindergarten teachers at the writer's work location.

1. Are the children encouraged to play or is there a greater emphasis on formalized instruction?

   Play is encouraged 6 Formalized instruction 0

2. Do the parents expect mostly formalized instruction to be provided by the program?

   Parents for formalized instruction 6
   Parents against formalized instruction 0
   Parents have no opinion 0

3. What has been done to enlighten the parents about the significance of play during the early childhood years?

   Workshops have been provided 0
   A newsletter or notices about play 0
   Nothing has been done 6

4. A. Has any type of program been developed to help remediate this situation?

   Yes 0 No 6

   B. Is so, is the program successful?

   This question does not apply for this school.

   C. If not, do you feel the parents and the school would benefit by receiving information on the benefits of play?

   Yes 6 No 0

5. Do you have a program which follows up through the summer months with activities and information for the parents?

   Yes 0 No 6

APPENDIX B

6. Do you feel that the parents would develop a more accepting attitude towards play if they knew more about it?

Yes 6 No 0

7. Would it be accurate to describe the circumstances as two-fold, the parents need to be made aware of the significance of play, as well as the need to continue developing positive perceptions towards play during the summer months?

Yes 6 No 0

APPENDIX C

Parent Pre/Post-Evaluation Questionnaire

Name: _____
Child's Name: _____
Teacher: _____

Please answer the following statements and questions as they apply to you. Circle your answers.

1. Young children learn best through the use of:

   a. formalized and structured learning
   b. active play and hands-on activities
   c. drilling basic facts and information

2. What percentage of time do you believe your child should spend playing in school?

   a. less than 20%
   b. 40% to 60%
   c. 80% or more

3. Should play be an integral part of the entire kindergarten curriculum?

   a. yes
   b. no
   c. sometimes

4. Do you encourage your child to pretend?

   a. yes
   b. no
   c. sometimes

5. How much time does your child spend playing (non-structured time)?

   a. some each day
   b. weekends mostly
   c. once or twice a week

6. Critical thinking, the process of interpreting, analyzing or evaluating information, is enhanced and promoted through the use of:

   a. manipulative toys and games
   b. computers
   c. textbooks and workbooks

APPENDIX C

7. Your child's vocabulary is best developed by:

   a. allowing your child to view television programs
   b. having your child read books
   c. talking with your child on a daily basis about topics he/she enjoys

8. How often does your child play outside?

   a. everyday
   b. 3 to 4 times a week
   c. weekends

9. Fine motor control, the process of controlling small muscles such as hands and fingers, is best enhanced and promoted through the use of:

   a. writing
   b. puzzles and blocks
   c. computers

10. Gross motor control, the process of controlling large muscles such as arms and legs, is best enhanced and promoted through the use of:

    a. blocks, books, and beads
    b. board games
    c. outdoor play equipment and toys

11. How often do you read aloud to your child?

    a. everyday
    b. once or twice a week
    c. four or five times a week
    d. never

12. How much time do you spend daily playing with your child?

    a. less than 30 minutes
    b. less than 1 hour
    c. one hour or more
    d. other _____

APPENDIX C

Newsletter Portion of the Post-Evaluation Questionnaire

13. The newsletter provided me with a better understanding of my child's developmental needs.

    a. yes
    b. no

14. Because of the newsletter, I am aware of the different types of learning activities that can be done at home with my child.

    a. yes
    b. no

15. I would like the newsletter to be a permanent part of the kindergarten program.

    a. yes
    b. no

16. As a result of the newsletter, I feel I have an increased understanding of the learning situations taking place in the classroom.

    a. yes
    b. no

APPENDIX D

Parent Workshop Evaluation

Topic: _____ Date: _____

1. Did this workshop meet your expectations?
   If not, why?

2. Was the material clearly presented?

3. Was the workshop presenter well informed?

4. What was the highlight of the workshop for you?

5. Any other comments:

Thank you for your cooperation.

SAMPLE NEWSLETTER

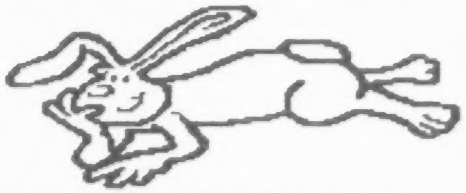
PAWSOME PLAY NEWSLETTER

SILVER RIDGE ELEMENTARY

APRIL 1990

LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT AND THE HOME

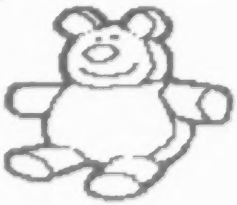
Language development involves the experiences of speaking, listening, writing and reading. Language development begins in the home. Therefore, parents should provide a home environment which is rich in resources and activities for their children. It is important that parents talk to their children as much as possible. The more you speak to your child the more he/she will learn and increase their language skills. Children need the opportunity to try new words, to receive your attention and to have encouragement for their efforts. Remember children learn by modeling so its important to interact verbally as often as possible with your child. Lucy Mitchell, author of "The Here and Now Story Book," best expressed the significance of play and language interaction when she said, "There is no better play material in the world than words."



PLAY ACTIVITY: HELP YOUR CHILD CREATE AN EXPERIENCE STORY!

Oral language is enhanced by experiences in your child's life, why not plan a special experience for your child.

HERE'S HOW:



Take him/her to the zoo, seaquarium or museum. Take pictures of your child while visiting this special place. Then write a story with your child based on the special experience you both shared. While your child is telling the story, you transcribe it on paper. Your child will see his or her own words come alive. Then place the story in a special place where your child can see it over and over again. Help your child read it and discuss all the fun you both shared on your special day.

IS READING ALOUD TO CHILDREN IMPORTANT?

The ability to read is a skill that your child will need for the rest of his/her life. Like any other skill it needs to be developed and encouraged in order to achieve competency. Reading aloud to children encourages the development of a curiousity and appreciation to learn. Reading to children enhances their vocabulary and experiences. Children that are read to discover that books provide a rich source of information and enjoyment. One of the most important reasons to read to your child is that it allows him/her the opportunity to share a very special time with you. By discussing the story after it is read, the parent is reviewing important critical thinking processes.

A special time should be set aside everyday for reading. Providing 15 minutes of reading daily can enhance a child's understanding of language. This will also allow the child to establish a positive attitude about reading in general.

SUGGESTED LITERATURE FOR FURTHER READING

The following titles are helpful in learning more about reading aloud.

1. "Playthings as Learning Tools: A Parent's Guide." Isenberg, J.P. and Jacobs, J.E. (1982). NY: Wiley.

2. "In Reading Out Loud!" Kimmel, M.M. and Segal, E. (1983). NY: Delacorte Press.

3. "Choosing Books For Children." Hearne, B. (1981). NY: Dell Publishing Co., Inc.

4. "The Read-Aloud Handbook." Trelease, J. (1982). NY: Penguin Books.

HOW TO READ ALOUD EFFECTIVELY

Reading aloud involves a performance on the part of the reader. The reader establishes a mood which will permeate the entire setting. The following points will help ensure positive reading experiences.

1. Read in a comfortable area, neither too hot or too cold.

2. Read in a quiet area free of distractions.

3. The lighting should not be too bright or dim.

4. Choose books appropriate in length for the age of your child. Allow the child to select the story he/she enjoys.

5. When you finish reading, let your child ask the questions and initiate conversation about the story. Allow your child to retell the story in his/her own words.

6. Share the illustrations with the listener.

7. Change the quality, tone, and pitch of voice with the story.

8. Most importantly, be enthusiastic about reading and about books in general.

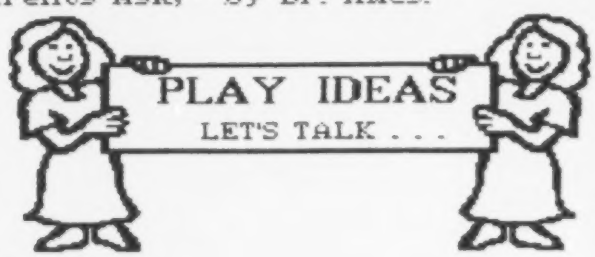
APRIL CURRICULUM INFORMATION

This month in Pre-First and kindergarten we will be decorating Spring Eggs and learning about the season of Spring. Later this month, we will be going on a field trip to Miramar high school to see the production of the Wizard of Oz.

PROBLEM SOLVING

Question: What is the Pre-First Program?

Answer: The chief purpose of a Pre-First program is to allow the child time to grow - to develop from within - to become himself in all of his total humanness. Taken from," Questions Parents Ask, " by Dr. Ames.



WHERE:

outside	pool	playground
kitchen	den	family room
bedroom	car	playroom
TV room	bus	walking
school	dinner	anywhere

WAYS TO ADD TO THE FUN:

1. When you take your child on an outing to the park , zoo, shopping trips, or museums talk about what you see and what you are doing.

2. Talk with your child about their experiences in school, when you talk with your child about their experiences you help them learn new words and understand their meanings.

3. Encourage your child to think critically about events. Have him/her describe the events, this will help your child learn to retell stories in their own words.

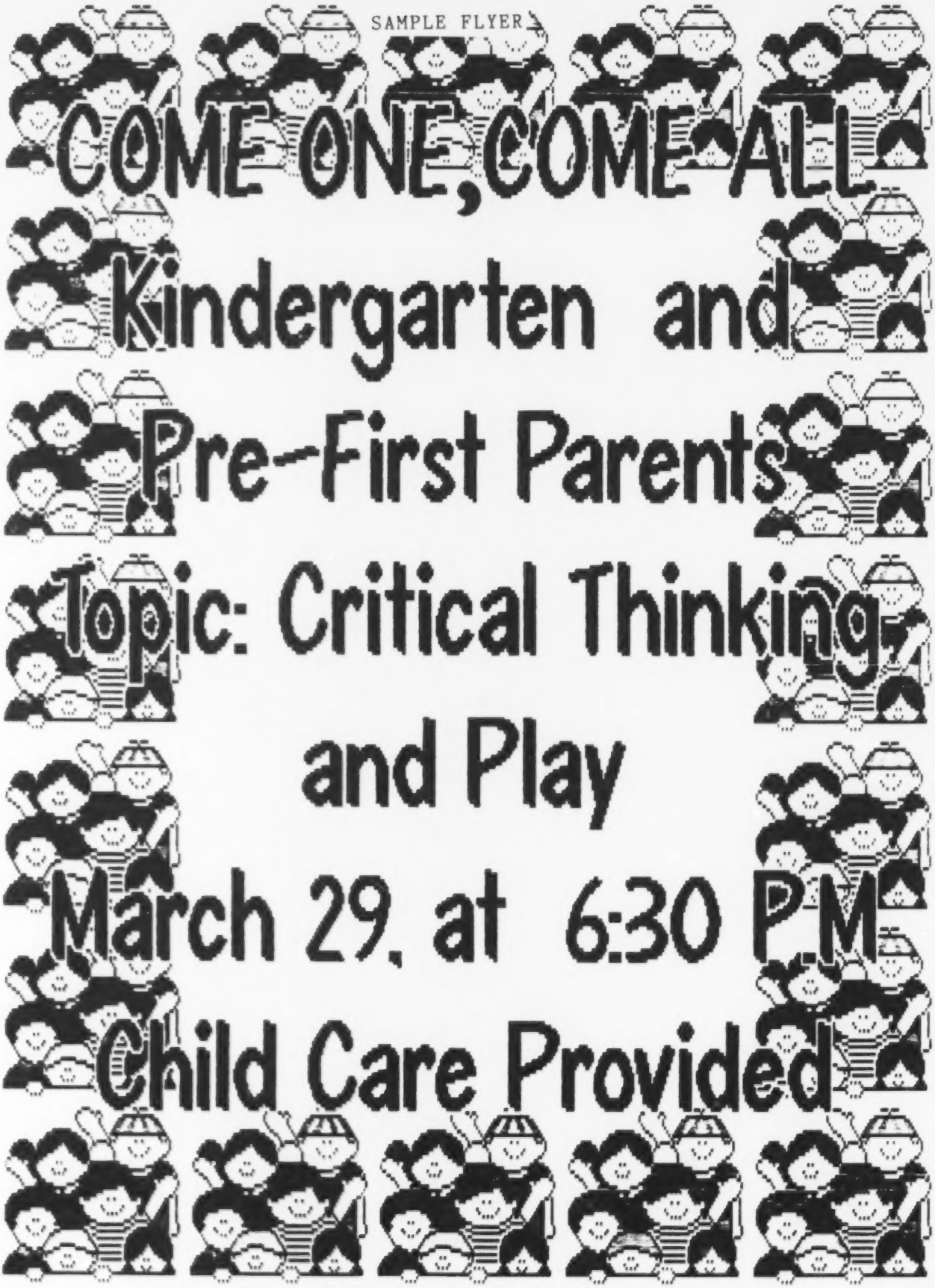
4. Most importantly read aloud to your child. Encourage him/her to identify letters and the meanings of words.

5. Monitor how much television your child views. Balance out his day to include physical activity not just sitting in front of the set. Take time out to play games together.

6. Act out your child's favorite stories with him/her use props or just pretend.

7. Create puppets for the stories they enjoy. These ideas were adapted from "Becoming a Nation of Readers."

SAMPLE FLYER



PARENTS' PERCENTAGE GAIN CHART

PARENT NUMBER	NUMBER WRONG PRE-TEST	NUMBER WRONG POSTTEST	PERCENTAGE GAIN
1	3	1	67
2	6	2	67
3	7	4	43
4	3	1	67
5	5	1	80
6	2	0	100
7	4	1	75
8	6	3	50
9	2	0	100
10	4	0	100
11	6	2	67
12	5	1	80
13	3	2	33
14	8	3	63
15	2	1	50
16	9	4	56
17	6	2	67
18	5	1	80
19	3	2	33
20	6	3	50
21	4	1	75
22	10	5	50
23	7	4	43
24	3	0	100
25	3	1	67
26	6	1	83
27	5	2	60

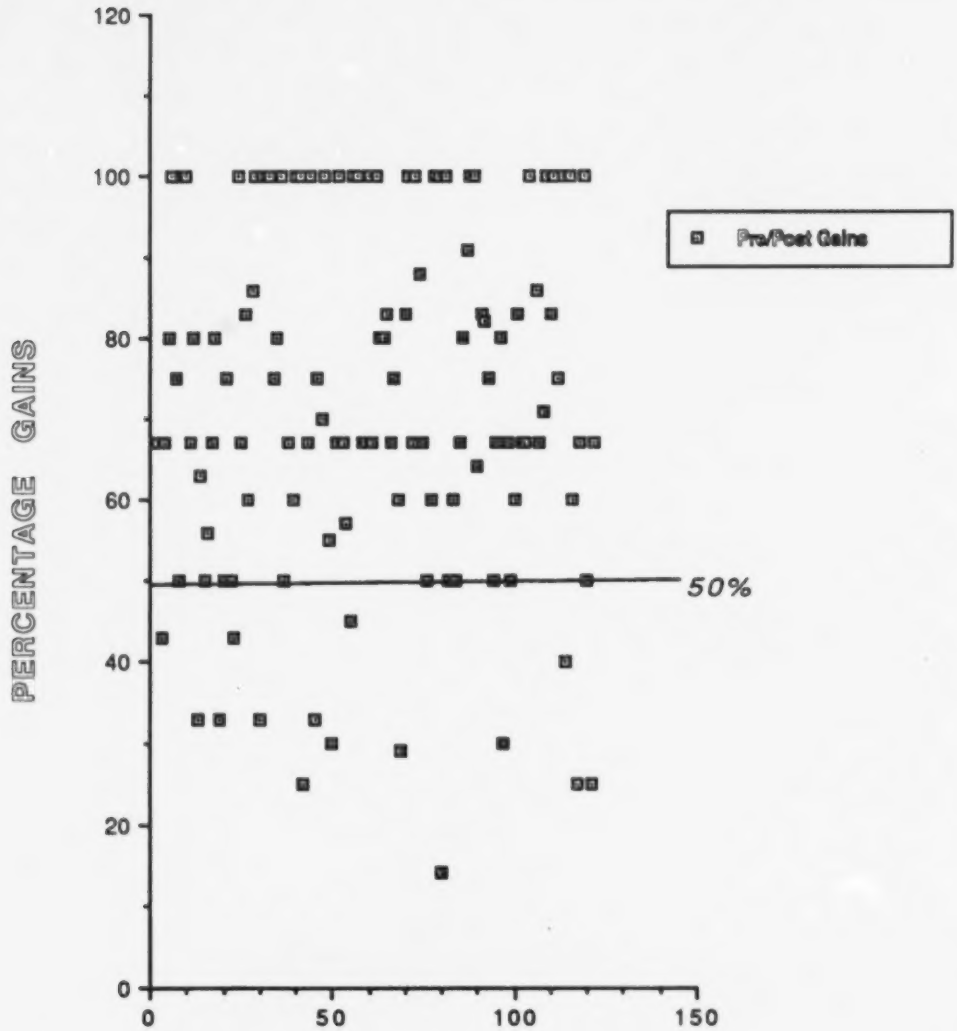
PARENT NUMBER	NUMBER WRONG PRETEST	NUMBER WRONG POSTTEST	PERCENTAGE GAIN
56	3	0	100
57	5	0	100
58	3	1	67
59	6	2	67
60	3	0	100
61	6	2	67
62	6	0	100
63	4	1	80
64	5	2	80
65	10	1	83
66	6	1	67
67	5	1	75
68	4	2	60
69	5	5	29
70	7	1	83
71	6	0	100
72	6	2	67
73	6	0	100
74	2	1	88
75	8	1	67
76	3	3	50
77	6	2	60
78	5	0	100
79	3	0	100
80	4	6	14
81	7	0	100
82	6	3	50
83	5	2	60

PARENT NUMBER	NUMBER WRONG PRE-TEST	NUMBER WRONG POSTTEST	PERCENTAGE GAIN
28	7	1	86
29	3	0	100
30	6	4	33
31	2	0	100
32	5	0	100
33	3	0	100
34	4	1	75
35	5	1	80
36	2	0	100
37	6	3	50
38	6	2	67
39	5	2	60
40	2	0	100
41	3	0	100
42	4	3	25
43	6	2	67
44	5	0	100
45	3	1	33
46	8	2	75
47	10	3	70
48	3	0	100
49	11	5	55
50	10	7	30
51	6	2	67
52	6	0	100
53	3	1	67
54	7	3	57
55	11	7	45

PARENT NUMBER	NUMBER WRONG PRE-TEST	NUMBER WRONG POSTTEST	PERCENTAGE GAIN
84	4	2	50
85	6	2	67
86	5	1	80
87	11	1	91
88	6	0	100
89	4	0	100
90	11	4	64
91	6	1	83
92	11	2	82
93	4	1	75
94	6	3	50
95	3	1	67
96	5	1	80
97	10	7	30
98	6	2	67
99	4	2	50
100	5	2	60
101	6	1	83
102	3	1	67
103	9	3	67
104	6	0	100
105	4	0	100
106	7	1	86
107	6	2	67
108	7	2	71
109	4	0	100
110	6	1	83
111	5	0	100

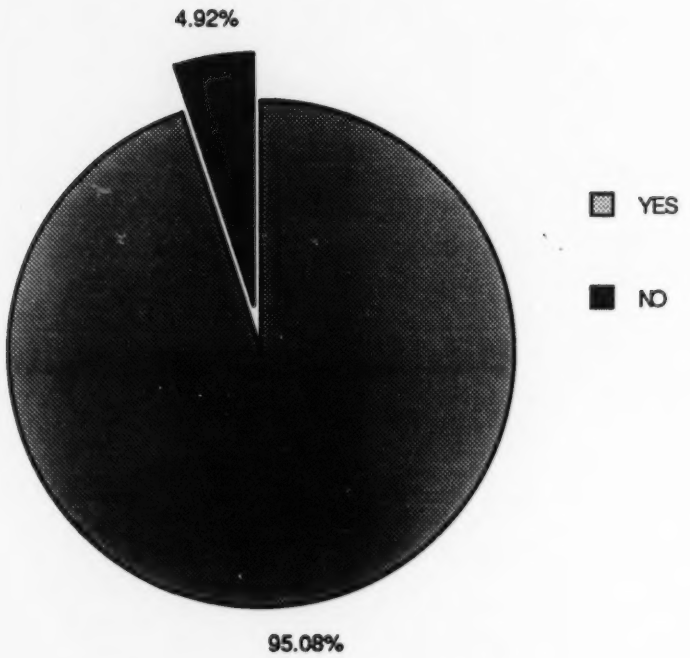
PARENT NUMBER	NUMBER WRONG PRE-TEST	NUMBER WRONG POSTTEST	PERCENTAGE GAIN
112	4	1	75
113	3	0	100
114	5	3	40
115	2	0	100
116	5	2	60
117	4	1	25
118	3	1	67
119	2	0	100
120	6	3	50
121	4	3	25
122	3	1	67

PRE/POSTTEST GAINS MADE BY PARENTS



APPENDIX I

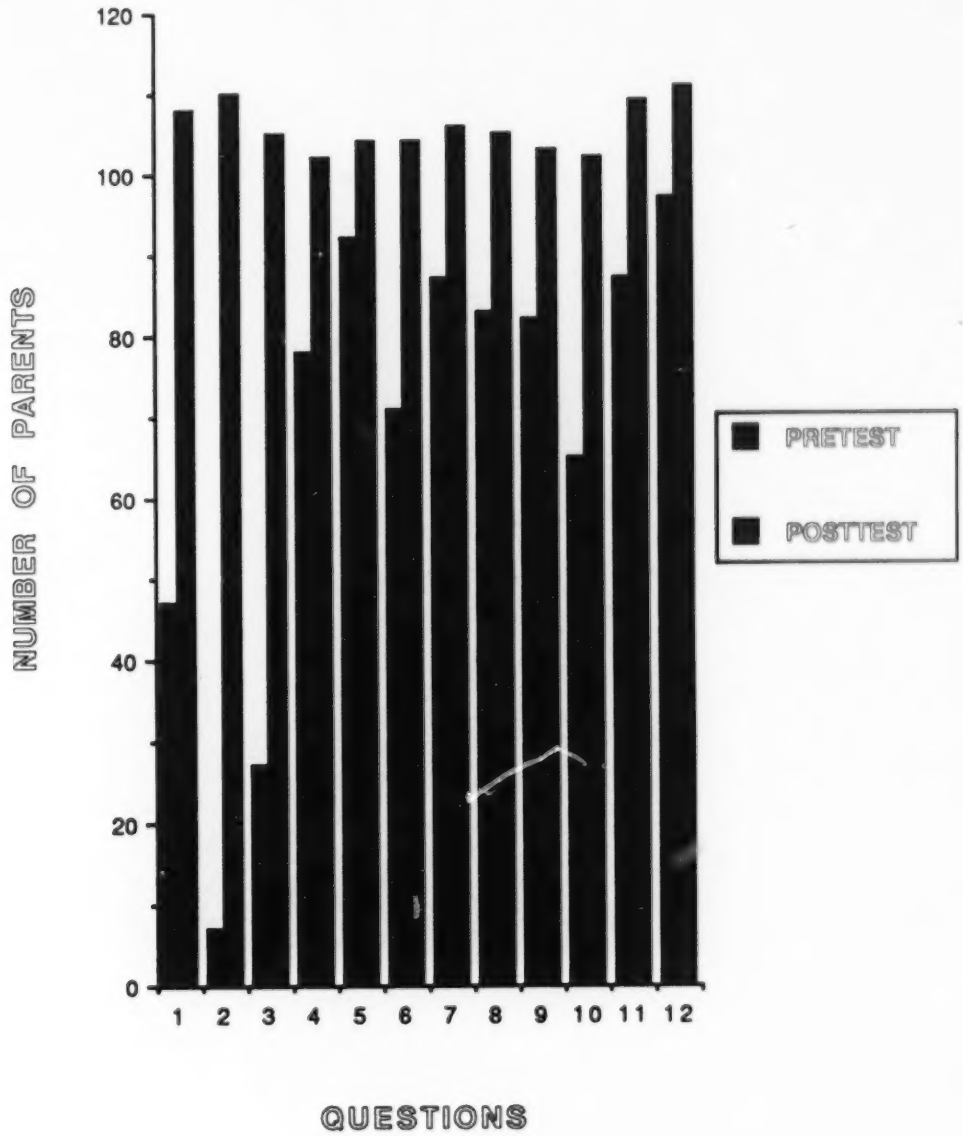
NEWSLETTER SURVEY RESULTS



APPENDIX J

PRE AND POST-EVALUATION
QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

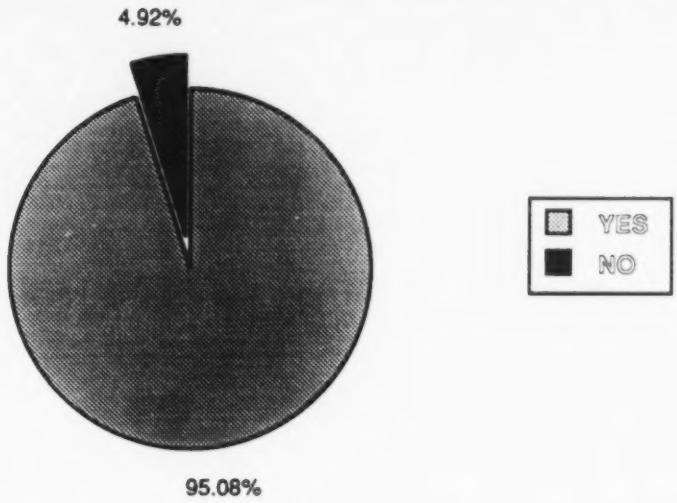
REVIEW OF PRE/POSTTEST RESPONSES



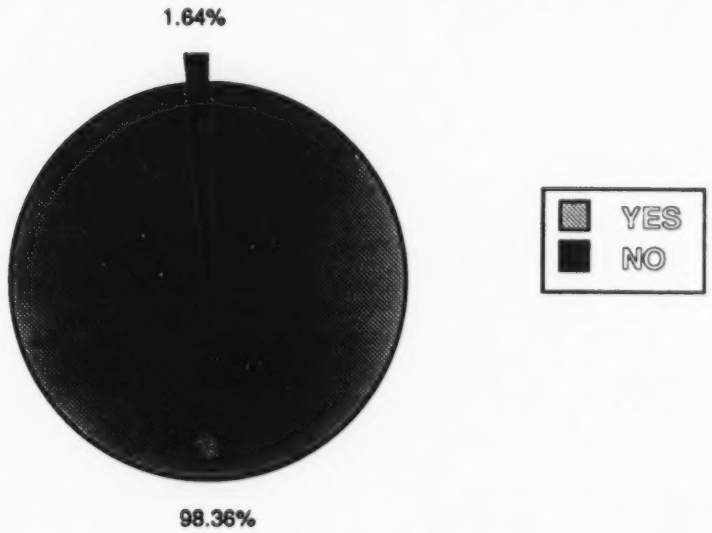
APPENDIX K

INDIVIDUAL NEWSLETTER
SURVEY QUESTION RESULTS

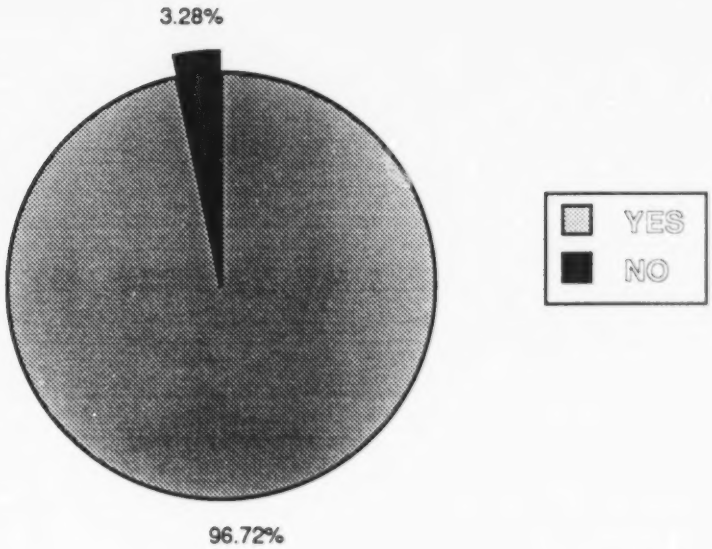
RESPONSE TO SURVEY QUESTION NUMBER 1



RESPONSE TO SURVEY QUESTION NUMBER 2



RESPONSE TO SURVEY QUESTION NUMBER 3



RESPONSE TO SURVEY QUESTION NUMBER 4